Meeting Record

MPO Technical Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 20, 2005
555 South 10th, Room 113
Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Ann Harrell, Roger Figard, Randy Hoskins, Larry Worth, Karl Fredrickson, Public Works/Utilities; Marvin Krout, David Cary, Planning; Marc Wullschleger; Urban Development; Doug Pillard, County Engineering; Steve McBeth, Rich Ruby, and James Miller (representing Jim Knott) NDOR.
OTHERS:	Brian Praeuner, Mike Brienzo, Virendra Singh, Thomas Shafer, Karen Sieckmeyer, Public Works/Utilities; Kent Morgan, Planning; Phyllis Hergenrader, Friends of Wilderness Park; Ron Schlautman, NDOR.
STATED PURPOSE OF THE MEETING:	Technical Committee Meeting

Ann Harrell called the meeting to order.

Agenda Item No. 1 - Review and action on the draft minutes of the December 2, 2004, Technical Committee Meeting.

Rich Ruby asked that his name be taken off the list as attending and Randy Hoskins asked that Virendra Singh's name be added.

A motion was made by Marc Wullschleger to approve the minutes with above changes, David Cary seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 2 - Review and action on acceptance of Transportation Management Systems evaluation Studies and Reports.

A. Lincoln Travel Time Study

Randy Hoskins indicated that he had talked briefly at the last meeting about some of these topics in the Lincoln Transportation System Management Report. The reports in front of you today are much more detailed. All three of these reports are part of the work plan that Public Work's puts together as part of the MPO. The Travel Time Study was basically done in the spring of 2002. The City contracted with The Schemmer Associates to put this together and they conducted an analysis of traffic condition on eight different corridors throughout the City, primarily looking at travel time and delays. It is Public Works' philosophy to do this every three to five years in order to evaluate all of the arterial streets. By making minor changes in signal timing, the City could drastically improve the efficiency of traffic

moving in the off peak direction. As a result of the changes in signal timing made along these eight corridors, an estimated $722,000 was saved annually. Over a three-year period, these savings can be as high as $2,166,000. Once the signal timings were in place, numerous field checks were scheduled for further adjustments to make sure everything worked as modeled.

B. 2002 Lincoln Crash Report, March 2005

This is using the 2002 crash data which is typically not available for approximately a year and a half after the end of the year. The City tracks the number of crashes that occur and takes information provided by the Police Department and checks and organize it. They look for intersections that were experiencing a significantly higher crash rate than the City-wide average. They found 60 intersections in the City that were determined to have higher crash rates. Each of these locations were then evaluated by the consultants. In 2002, there were a little under 8,900 crashes reported in the City which was the lowest number of crashes since 1993. Those crashes resulted in about $168,000,000 worth of monetary loses based on wages, medical expenses, property damages and insurance cost. There has been no significant change in the number of injury crashes that have been occurring in the City despite the fact that we are averaging 2% to 3% per year growth in the number of miles traveled. As a result of that, the rate of injury accidents is dropping throughout the City. Each year the City takes a look at some of the locations that have been historically showing up on these high crash lists. Also, City Engineering Standards have been upgraded through use of medians, and the 2+1 concept where left turns were occurring from the through lanes. Signal upgrades, signing and marking upgrades, and increased compliance with seat belt laws have also helped. In 2002 there were 258 collisions involving pedestrians and bicycles. Of those crashes involving bicycles only about two of them might have been helped by bike lanes. Pedestrian collisions have gradually decreased in the City of Lincoln over the past 25 years. Again, with the increased population and increasing number of miles traveled, that represents a higher decrease in the rate of pedestrian crashes that are occurring.

Virendra Singh spoke about the savings that has resulted from some of the work that has been done in the past. The City looked at 10 intersections in the community for adequate time reduction. Some of the intersections that were looked at are 70th and Cornhusker; Fremont; Fletcher Avenue and Highway 34; Normal Blvd. and 62nd; “O” Street and Cotner Blvd; and 33rd and Sheridan Roundabout. The information that Singh is talking about is on the website. We found the net benefit in some of the present work has saved approximately 10 million dollars.

David Cary commented that one focus of the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan is the bike lanes. Downtown appears more bicycle friendly even though a large part of the downtown does not allow bicycles on sidewalks. Information shows that bike lanes give the sense of making it safer for the bicyclist. A lot of bicyclist wouldn’t even consider being in the street in downtown, but if there was a bike lane you would likely increase the number of bicyclist in the downtown.

C. 2004 Vehicle Occupancy Study Report, January, 2005.

The Vehicle Occupancy data has been used in the City of Lincoln for its ongoing Transportation Improvement Program. Nationally passenger vehicle occupancy data continues to be recognized as a key element of an effective urban travel monitor program. The screenline occupancy studies are part of the Unified Planning Work Program and have been conducted since 1977. The two screenlines that were selected are 27th Street Corridor and "A" Street Corridor. In the 2004 study, 29 location were monitored. These study locations were monitored during the morning and evening peak hours. The average vehicle occupancy for Year 2004 was 1.16 during the morning peak and 1.24 during the evening peak. A review of the trend data from base year 1977 to year 2004 indicated that the highest occupancy occurred during the year 1980 with 1.23 during the morning and 1.37 during the evening.

One of the consequences of the reduction of average vehicle occupancy from year 1980 to 2004 is that for every 1000 persons using our roadway system during the evening peak hour, there were approximately 80 additional vehicles in 2004 as compared to 1980 (730 vs 810 vehicles). Basically what the City is finding is that it does have a significant impact on the capacity of the roadway. One may look at a design capacity to carry an estimated vehicle volume of 24,000 that was designed back in 1980. We are actually needing to add an additional 10% based on the current occupancy that we find on the street system today.

Figard asked how do these numbers compare to any national averages or comparable cities. Singh said he had not investigated that part of it. Singh stated that the City feels we have a pretty good trend and we can identify what the future will hold. The only other item Singh had was with the recent increase in overall gasoline prices, you will probably see the same kind of activity that occurred back in the 70's when gasoline prices jumped up. It will be interesting to note what happens now with the gas prices running in the $2.20 range. Will these prices actually have an impact on overall occupancy study? Hoskins mentioned that the slight increase that we experienced this year in the ridership is not statistically significant.

A motion was made to accept the Transportation Management Systems Evaluation Studies and Reports by Larry Worth, seconded by Karl Fredrickson. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 3 - Staff briefing on the Nebraska Department of Roads Long Range Transportation Plan Update.

Steve McBeth with the NDOR explained that the NDOR is updating the Long Range Transportation Plan. The original plan was done in 1995. Most states are updating their Long Range Transportation Plan or have already done so. NDOR began the latest update this past August and is hoping that by early 2006 they will have completed the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan. The end result will be a document that they hope is user friendly, easy to read, brief and cover the key elements. The Long Range Plan is suppose to help guide all agency concerned with transportation in Nebraska. Although primary focus will be on highways because that is really today's transportation element in Nebraska. It is going to be a policy document not a project specific document. To date, NDOR has put together a draft set of goals and objectives and an assessment of existing conditions like population trends,

performance, different road types, mileages, and vehicle miles. Our primary focus recently has been the public outreach. In February, NDOR met with the three MPO's in Nebraska which included Lincoln. NDOR had a stakeholders meeting in March and there will be another one at the end of the process when there is a draft document to review. Currently, NDOR is sending letters and surveys out to Cities and Counties who are not represented by an MPO. There was about 600 one page surveys that were sent out. The purpose of this survey is to get some feedback from the small towns and counties around Nebraska. There is a website you can also check whenever you want to get updated or give input. http://www.dor.state.ne.us/lrtp/index.htm.

Krout asked when we could anticipate a draft plan of the review? McBeth stated it would be toward the end of this year.

Agenda Item No. 4 - Other topics for discussion.

Mike Brienzo spoke briefly on the MPO Certification that is being held May 4th and 5th (see attached).

Meeting was adjourned.